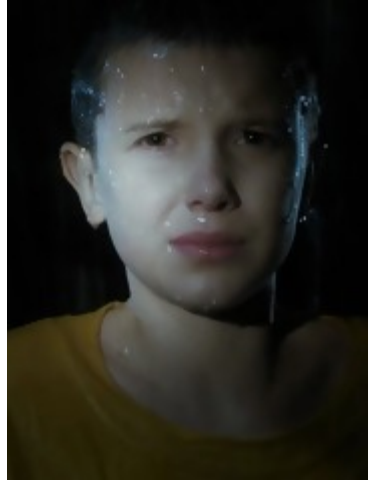

The Kid In The Rain by bikelock28

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The Kid In The Rain

Set between 1.01 *The Vanishing of Will Byers* and 1.02 *The Weirdo On Maple Street.*

The Kid In The Rain

"Holy shit," Dustin gasps, though his voice is barely audible against the hammering rain.

"Oh my God," says Lucas.

"Hello?" asks Mike, inching closer to the shivering kid in the yellow t-shirt, "Are you okay?". The kid stares back with huge dark eyes, teeth chattering and rain dripping down pale skin. "Are you lost?"

"What the heck is this?" Dustin gapes.

"It's a kid, dumbass," Lucas snarks.

"Yeah, I can *see* it's a kid. I mean what the heck is *going on* with this,"

"Look at it, it's cold. We gotta get it inside," Mike insists.

"What about Will?" Lucas argues, "We're supposed to be finding him,"

"What, you just wanna leave her here?"

"Her?" Dustin interjects.

"Dustin, that really isn't the point right now,"

"I'm just sayin', that's not a girl. It's a..."

"Don't call her an 'it',"

"You called it 'it' like a second ago,"

"Well now I'm calling her a she,"

"Guys!" Lucas interrupts, "What are we going to *do?"*

The kid glances nervously between them, looking half-ready to run off. The rain is lashing down, making the boys' shoes squelchy inside and their jackets heavy with water.

"We gotta take her home," Mike decides, and before anyone can argue he tells the kid, "Hey, come with us. We'll take you somewhere dry,"

He holds out his hand. The kid looks at it but doesn't move.

"This is stupid," Lucas tuts.

"Well what do you suggest we do?" Mike snaps, wheeling round, "Leave her here to freeze to death? She's not even wearing shoes!"

"Okay, I'm gonna take this," Dustin announces, ushering the others aside. He walks straight up to the strange kid in the yellow shirt, and half-shouts, "We. Will. Take. You. Home". He mimes actions. The kid stares back.

"Don't scare her," Mike pleads.

Dustin ignores him and continues, "Come. With. Us,"

The kid looks from Dustin to Mike and back again, then very gingerly, takes a step towards them.

"Yusss," cheers Dustin.

"That's it. Well done. Come on," coaxes Mike. Lucas shoves his hands in his pockets and follows. The four of them trudge in a clumsy procession back to the bikes.

"Here," Mike explains, climbing onto his saddle, "You sit on the back,"

The kid stares.

"It's so weird," Lucas hisses, "It's like it doesn't understand what you're saying,"

"Yeah I don't think it can talk," Dustin agrees.

Mike points to the seat, "See, you sit there, and hold onto me. I'll go

slow, I promise,"

The kid climbs onto the back seat of Mike's bicycle, glancing warily around.

"'Kay, let's get back to Mike's, stat," Dustin orders. The three boys kick their stands up and set off. The kid is skinny but the added weight on the back of the bike makes Mike wobble. Dustin cycles alongside him, eyeing the newcomer.

"You know, I think you might be right about her being a girl," he conceded, "She's kinda got girly eyelashes,"

"Girly eyelashes?" Lucas scoffs.

"Yeah. You know, like, long,"

"That is such bull. And what kind of girl has hair like *that?"*

"It's been shaved," Mike tells him, irritated.

"Exactly. No girl shaves her head,"

"She could be a punk," Dustin points out.

"If you two are so sure why don't you *check?"* Lucas taunts.

"Ew! No!" Dustin shudders.

"Don't be gross," Mike snaps, "She's a girl, just leave it at that". He cranes his neck to talk to the kid sat behind him, "My house is about ten minutes away. We're going to have to sneak you in, okay? We're not supposed to be out,"

They cycle on through the downpour. The kid's bony fingers dig into Mike's sides. He's used to having Holly or Will on the back of his bike, and they both fidget. This kid is very still, not to mention unable to speak. Mike isn't sure what's happening to him and his friends at the moment, but is sure is weird. They've lost a Will and found a...well, Mike isn't sure what this new discovery means. But he is sure that this kid is cold, alone and scared. When Mike visits his grandparents, Grandpa sometimes reads bits of out the Bible, which

is weird but Mike figures he's used to it. There's a bit about "when I was hungry you fed me, when I was lost you took me home". Mike doesn't believe in God. He knows that you're supposed to do all that anyway, because it's right. Taking care of this strange kid with big eyes and no trousers- that's the right thing to do. Mike knows for certain.

"Okay, how we gonna play this one?" Dustin asks.

"What?" Mike mutters, yanked out of his thoughts. They're onto Maple Street by now.

"Getting four people into your house without your parents seeing. Duh," Dustin explains, rolling his eyes.

"We'll climb in," Mike announces, "We can use the outside generator as a leg-up,"

"Are you crazy?" Lucas asks.

"Steve Harrington did it earlier," Mike shrugs.

"What?"

"He was sneaking into Nancy's room,"

"He was wh-?" Dustin begins in a faint voice, but Lucas cuts him off waspishly.

"So we can climb into Nancy's room, but we need to get to the *basement,"*

While they've been bickering, the kid has been perched silently on the back of Mike's bike, eyeing the house warily. Mike can feel the rain from the kid's sodden t-shirt soaking his back. The wetness in uncomfortable but the pressure is kind of nice. He needs to protect this kid.

"Guess we're just gonna make a break for it," he announces.

"Yeah," Dustin agrees.

Lucas gets off his bike, switches the light off, and walks it round to the hedge by the side of Mike's house. He hides it carefully under the hedge, and Dustin does the same.

Mike helps the kid off his bike and explains, "We're not supposed to be out- but don't worry, that isn't your fault. The door's always on the latch so we're gonna run in and head downstairs. Just follow me, okay? Lucas, you go next and Dustin will guard the rear,"

"Wait, one more thing," Dustin adds. He takes his battered baseball cap off, and attempts to jam it onto the kid's fuzzy head. The kid flinches and jumps away, startled.

"It's to cover your hair," Dustin explains, "A disguise,"

"Yeah, like that's gonna make a difference," Lucas mutters.

"Just leave her," says Mike. Dustin reluctantly puts the hat back on his own head.

"Everybody ready?" Mike checks.

"Yup,"

"Yup,"

The kid stares back at him. Since all the kid seems to do is stare, Mike takes it as a yes.

"Right...go!"

He pelts towards the front door, pushes it open as quietly as he can, dives through, and glances behind to check that the others are following. The kid is shuffling behind him, followed by a wary-looking Lucas, who is tailed by Dustin. Mike scurries through the hall, while Dustin shuts the door gingerly behind him. The four of them race down the stairs to the basement, and finally exhale.

"Get out coats and shoes off, quickly!" Mike orders, and there's a scuffle while the boys hurl off their raincoats and sneakers and throw them into a pile under the stairs and sit down as if they've spent all evening in the middle of a D&D campaign, not traipsing around the

woods. To the boys' surprise, the kid sits down too, big eyes looking even huger in the light of the room. The quietness is jarring to Mike- their adventure seems abruptly over and here they are alone in the basement, pale and dripping with rain. The kid shudders uncomfortably. Mike picks up his coat and hands it over, draping it awkwardly around the kid's spindly shoulders. Silence. Mike, Dustin and Lucas stare at the kid, and the kid stares back at Mike, Dustin and Lucas. Silence. Finally, Lucas can't bear it anymore and blurts out, "Is there a number we can call for you parents?".

Thank you for reading. Please review to let me know what you thought. Have a great day.